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Message Text

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63
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-05 ERDA-05 OES-03 OMB-01 /082 W
---------- 043874
R 200146Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7303
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
AMCONSUL SYDNEY
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
SECDEF WASHDC
CNO WASHDC
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
CINCPACFLT MAKALAPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 439

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, US, AS
SUBJ: NUCLEAR-POWERED WARSHIPS

REF: STATE 9592 (NOTAL), CANBERRA 0206 (NOTAL), CANBERRA 0320

1. AS REPORTED IN CANBERRA 206, PRIME MINISTER FRASER SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO OPEN AUSTRALIAN PORTS TO U.S. NUCLEAR-POWERED WAR VESSELS. HE SAID THIS WAS A MATTER IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS TO WHICH HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD GIVE PRIORITY ATTENTION.

2. IN OUR VIEW, KILLEN'S STATEMENT REPORTED IN CANBERRA 320 IS NOT REPEAT NOT A CLEVER OR DEVISOUS TACTIC DESIGNED TO POSTPONE ADMISSION OF U.S. NPWS TO AUSTRALIAN PORTS AS SUGGESTED IN STATE 9592. RATHER, WE BELIEVE STATEMENT
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EVOLVED FROM DISCUSSIONS MINISTER KILLEN AND PRIME MINISTER FRASER HAD WITH CODELS HOLLINGS AND ADDABBO WHERE INDIAN

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OCEAN RECEIVED INORDINATE AMOUNT OF ATTENTION. MOREOVER, WE TEND TO BELIEVE THAT KILLEN REMARK RE U.S. NUCLEAR SUBMARINE VISITS TO COCKBURN SOUND WAS VERY POSSIBLY GRATUITOUS EXTENSION TO HIS MORE GENERAL COMMENTS ON IMPORTANCE NEW GOVERNMENT ATTACHES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE FACILITY ON THE INDIAN OCEAN. IT IS TRUE THAT THE GOA FACILITIES IN COCKBURN SOUND WILL EVENTUALLY BE EXPANDED TO PROVIDE DOCKING FACILITIES FOR VISITING NPWS, HOWEVER THIS WILL BE SOMETIME IN THE INDEFINITE FUTURE.

3. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL WORK OUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEGAL CLEARANCES NEEDED TO PERMIT NPW VISITS TO AUSTRALIA IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE. HOWEVER, KILLEN'S STATMENTN, GRATUITOUS OR NOT, HAS PREDICTABLY AROUSED OPPONENTS OF NPW VISITS BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE ALP, AND WILL MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE FRASER GOVERNMENT TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM. KILLEN'S COMMENTS ON THE VISITS OF NUCLEAR ARMED WARSHIPS DO NOT IN OUR VIEW REPRESENT OFFICIAL GOA THINKING. THE GOA IS WELL AWARE OF OUR POSITION ON THE QUESTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON U.S. NAVAL VESSELS. THIS WAS NOT A PROBLEM DURING THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT AND WE DO NOT EXPECT IT TO BE A PROBLEM WITH THE FRASER GOVERNMENT. KILLEN IS A GOOD FRIEND OF THE U.S. BUT HIS APPROACH TO HIS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND HIS PRONOUNCED TENDENCY TO SHOOT FROM THE HIP WITHOUT FIRST SEEKING THE ADVICE OF HIS CIVIL SERVICE ADVISORS HAVE AGAIN RAISED DOUBTS ABOUT HIS ABILITY TO HANDLE HIS NEW PROTFOLIO. WE SHOULD HAVE A BETTER IDEA ON TIMING FOR APPROVAL OF NPW VISITS AFTER THE NEW PARLIAMENT GOES INTO SESSION ON FEBRUARY 17.
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To: STATE
Type: TE
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